WE MUST FIRST RECOGNIZE IT, AND THEN CALL IT BY IT'S REAL NAME – EVIL

AN ESSAY BY

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Only then can we resolve the problems in our country and the world

Civilized societies are based on two fundamental human principles – natural moral laws and free will.

Free will is an inalienable human right, inherent in our human nature. We each have almost unlimited freedom of choice with some exceptions for the good of society. ***The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person****. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order.* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1738, my emphasis)

But we see in today's social/political environment, governments and institutions in power insist on freedom of choice for themselves and their favored constituents but are more than willing or even feel compelled to restrict or ban freedom of choice for those who disagree with their rules and ideology, e.g., abortion and LGBTQI+.

And unfortunately, true freedom of choice must necessarily include the potential for choosing evil. Anything less is limited free will. Evil exists because people may and have chosen it throughout history, including right now, in today's reality.

Natural moral laws are the fundamental basis for understanding right and wrong behavior. And free will allows every human being to choose between those right and wrong behaviors. Due to the extraordinary diversity in humanity, we will always have individuals, organizations and nations behaving across the entire spectrum from the most extreme goodness to the most extreme evil while most behave somewhere between the two extremes.

Natural law *is a theory in ethics and philosophy that says that human beings possess* ***intrinsic values*** *that govern our reasoning and behavior. Natural law maintains that these rules of right and wrong* ***are inherent in people and are not created by society or court judges***. (Wikipedia, my emphasis)

Natural moral laws are written in the human heart, but they may be interpreted differently by each and every individual. They are most easily understood as virtues and vices.

A virtue *is a trait or quality that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. In other words, it* ***is a behavior that shows high moral standards: doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. The opposite of virtue is vice.*** (Wikipedia, my emphasis)

The Seven Heavenly Virtues are: temperance, justice, prudence, fortitude, faith, hope, and charity/love. Additional examples of virtues are compassion, respect, generosity, and gratitude/thankfulness. See Virtuesforlife.com for a list and description of 73 virtues.

Virtues can be summed up in one word – LOVE. Love one another. Love your neighbor. Love your enemy. Treat others as you want them to treat you. Virtues are based on how you treat others.

On the opposite side, we have vices, e.g., the Seven Cardinal Sins: vainglory/pride, greed/covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. The 'Seven Cardinal Sins' are all about natural desires within us that are driven toward selfish behavior – pride, greed, etc.

Jesus gave a more inclusive description of vices in Mark 7:20-23. *But what comes out of a person, that is what defiles. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within, and they defile.* Lies, cheating, fraud, corruption, etc., are other examples. But they are just as much a fundamental part of our human nature as virtues. And every one of us has the freedom to choose them.

Vices can be summed up in one word – EVIL. War, persecution, injustice, discrimination, violence, etc. are examples of evil; humans' inhumanity against one another.

We don't' typically recognize or admit that evil is real and present in our society. And we don't typically pursue evil but by making it look good or

right or desirable, we are tempted toward a perceived good, whatever that may be, even though it may be wrong or even evil.

Evil doesn't care which side it's on; it's on all sides, everyone against one another, politically, religiously or ideologically. All sides can be equally evil. Its purpose and goal are to divide us, build animosity and hatred between us, diminish and subjugate us. It wins whenever we give in to it. It's winning right now.

There are many examples in history of individuals, either as leaders, in groups or just on their own, committing atrocious acts of evil against others for one reason or another or just for the satisfaction of it. Hitler, Stalin and many other dictators directed international wars and genocide. Ted Bundy, Gary Ridgeway and many others were serial killers. The world has suffered and is currently suffering greatly and unjustly from evil, e.g., the war in Ukraine, now in Israel and Gaza, and many other places around the world.

If we understand and accept the premise as described above, we must recognize what we see in our society here and now, and we must call it what it really is – EVIL. Once we understand that, we must resist evil at every step. What we have done instead has been to treat it as just another option, another choice, and allow it to become commonly accepted. It's the new normal. Hatred, division, competition for power and control, money and influence. That's what we have become and what we must resist.

And if you understand the above and watch the evening news, you must recognize that much of what the current governmental/political administration is, in fact, doing is evil personified. Lies, misinformation, obfuscation, distraction from the truth, wielding power illegally, lashing out at and punishing every form of opposition, not accepting any form of accountability, etc., are all truthfully evil. We must recognize it and call it by its real name in order to defeat it.

And it's not an exaggeration to say that they have truly harmed millions of people, in this country and around the world. They have destroyed our position of respect and trust in the world community. Not only that, they have already destroyed many of the fundamental institutions of our government that we have carefully developed over decades. They have dismantled many of the fundamental services this government is

responsible for. The harm that has been done is massive and catastrophic across the board.

They have made the oath of office a laughingstock, a meaningless gesture; they never intended to protect the Constitution or follow the rule of law. If the administration is free and willing to do it, Congress and the Supreme Court must rightly recognize their own responsibility to resist and deny it. As they have abdicated that responsibility, they are equally responsible for the evil results we endure.

America can never be ‘great again’ when it’s based on evil. Make America Great Again by basing our government and institutions on virtues – love of one another, respect for all, not just some, care for all those in need, protect and care for the environment we live in, and apply those principles to all peoples of the world. Make the world a better place by being a good example instead of one no one can trust or like.

See it, recognize it, and call it by its real name – EVIL, and then resist it with all necessary measures and resources. Show people that we really are good, not evil.